DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 707 CE 037 709

AUTHOR Sumner, Jack; Wilson, Ric
TITLE Adult Retraining--An Investment in People.
PUB DATE Aug 83
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the South Dakota Vocational Association Conference (Sioux Falls, SD, August 1-3, 1983).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Learning; *Adult Students; Adult Vocational Education; Age Differences; *Educational Change; Job Layoff; Job Training; Lifelong Learning; Postsecondary Education; *Retraining; *Student Characteristics; Technological Advancement
IDENTIFIERS *Job Training Partnership Act 1982; South Dakota

ABSTRACT

Adult retraining is an important area for educators to understand because there appear to be some changes developing in the delivery of education and training. One change relates to the entry of private enterprise into the training field, such as the computer courses being held by Radio Shack. Other changes concern the population to be educated. This population tends to be more mobile than ever before, and older. These characteristics mean that many adults will be coming and going in training programs (having an effect on the types of programs that can be successful), and that adjustments in teaching strategies will have to be made to compensate for adults' slower reaction times and possible health problems. Other changes in the adult population that will affect retraining include the possibility of job layoff (which may potentially make learners hostile or fearful), increasingly stressful ways of life, and smaller families. The explosion of knowledge as technology advances also makes the task of teaching adults even more overwhelming; the amount of information students must know constantly increases. (The last part of this paper is an overview of the federal Job Training Partnership Act, with emphasis on how it can be used in South Dakota.) (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ADULT RETRAINING--AN INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE

1983 SOUTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

AUGUST 1-3, 1983

SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J Sumner
R Wilson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Jack Sumner, Ric Wilson
University of South Dakota

ED237707

This presentation addresses adult retraining from two perspectives. The first deals with the characteristics of adults and adults in retraining programs and the second part of the program will deal with the Jobs Partnership Training Act (JPTA) as "an investment in people" in South Dakota. Ric Wilson, who has been researching the act at the state level and with our congressional representatives, will update us in the second part of the presentation, along with any questions.

The broad picture of adult retraining is an important area for educators to understand because there appears to be some changes coming in the delivery of education and training, particularly as it relates to the private sector. One change is the presence of so called "new investors." We see this in the entrepreneurs such as Radio Shack (Tandy) who are conducting computer training classes, JC Penney Seminars in major cities, and the General Motors budget of $1 million a year just for training. To bring into a clearer perspective for all at this conference, I must mention the magazine, "Successful Meetings," has found that

CE037709

this country had a major training commitment last year in meetings, and conferences across the country just like this one--that represented an expenditure by participants in excess of $2 billion dollars.

In people terms, though, retraining is also quite sizeable. Management author George Odiorne has projected that from 1979 -to- 1989 over 26 million people will have to come back for training just to replace those persons leaving the work force. Additionally, six million craftsmen will be retiring and somehow their replacements will have to be retrained.

An additional surprise is that Odiorne has anticipated that three to four million persons at the managerial level will have to be upgraded to stay current in their field. Keeping up in our area is a problem, so much so that recently it was suggested that among many engineering specialities, new information is coming along so rapidly that for the average engineer to maintain his level of competence requires that he or she should be reading about thirty articles a day.

In order to understand how this will impact at the instructional level, let's examine some of the factors that effect the teaching- learning process in adult retraining. To begin with the characteristics of the adult population in the United States are also characteristics to be found in most of the adult population to be retrained. We know, for

example, that most adults are now more mobil than ever before. National estimates are that 17% of the population is or can be classified as highly mobil--although segments of this population are becoming less mobile as unemployment and income figures change. This means we can expect retraining students to come and go.

Other general characteristics of the population point out that we have changed from larger families to smaller families, from low stress life styles to higher stress life styles, from moderate unemployment levels to high unemployment, and from predictable career patterns to less than predictable patterns. This is having a sizeable and significant effect on the need for retraining.

From the adult educators perspective, the characteristics of adults have been fairly well documented from experiences with the MDTA, CETA, and related programs. However, since these programs, we now know that the average age of the population has changed. It's getting older. To dramatize this aging--did you know in this country, every day of the week we can sing "Happy Birthday" to 5,000 adults on their 65th birthday. This means those adults in our retraining programs can be expected to be, on the average, older than expected. Another generalization relates to attitude. Those coming to retraining programs have probably been unsettled, even threatened, especially if this arrives as a result of a layoff, or termination. This means the

instructor should be prepared to deal with psychological mechanisms that people develop to deal with their problems. In some cases this means such things as: rationalization, displacement (blaming), and projective defense behavior will interfere with their learning, and of course teaching.

Along with the increase in age and other changes of the adults in retraining, are the more observable characteristics seen in most groups of older persons. Among these are the physical differences including slower reaction times in vision, hearing, and physical movement. This means an instructor must work hard at increasing the amount and variation in the types of instruction to impact on the learning process. This also has considerable significance in terms of individual safety, health, and productivity in OJT programs.

It is important to point out that this does not mean that most older adults cannot be retrained. It means that the way in which the adult is instructed and the way in which the instructor deals with the instructional situation must reflect a different approach. E. L. Thorndike, in studies in the 30s, and Cattell in the 50s, demonstrated that adults can and do learn. There is, however, a different set of factors to be dealt with to accommodate these differences among adults. The most important is to recognize that adults usually learn well, but at a different rate.

Definitive studies that show that retraining is an investment have been elusive--and no single effort has been conclusive. From the research on training, cost efficiency models, cost effectiveness, and cost benefit models are the most popular approaches to evaluating, retraining, and training efforts. Most of these approaches are expensive, require sophisticated designs, and are limited in application. The more practical approach is to consider retraining as an investment and an investment that has a significant return. This, of course, demands a different orientation to retraining values and benefits. This means looking at returns on an investment that is slightly intangible but nevertheless be identifiable. Here are a few returns that should be considered:

1. Trainee attitudes about their work, their work area, their company, its product and services;
2. Health in terms of an individual's health, both short and long term;
3. Safety in terms of the individual and co-workers;
4. Productivity and production increases, long term as well as short term;
5. Minimization and elimination of production wastes;
6. Reclamation and savings from scraps and productions processes; and
7. Minimization and elimination of production down-time.

In conclusion, we know that we are approaching the age of "the adult." We have just reached the age of majority, a census figures shows that 51% of the population in the U.S. is over 31 years of age. As our society continues to change, demands will increase for retraining, not only for those that change careers (remember those estimates that say a person changes career 7-12 times during out lifetime), but for an adult population that has to keep up with a society that is information oriented, becoming computer literate, and moving toward technologically sophisticated.

A comment by former NFL quarterback Bobby Lane reminds us of the immediacy of our task--he said, "I never lost a football game--I just ran out of time." It's important that we don't run out of time. We need to remember that the task of "adult retraining" is an important undertaking because these factors and others will continue to challenge the greatest country in the world, to be productive, competitive and a positive example of what a free society can accomplish.

Our next part deals with the update on JTPA and South Dakota--this part will be presented by Ric Wilson.

JTPA/South Dakota

There are four purposes of the Jobs Training Partnership Act. The first is to increase the productive capacity and

utilization of the Nation's work force. The second is to enhance job skills of unemployed and underemployed individuals. The third purpose is to assist communities with high rates of unemployment and finally, the Act establishes a community-based employment and training system built on a partnership between state and local government and private sectors.

The major thrust of JTPA is found in Title I--which is a new delivery system for employment and training for the economically disadvantaged. This part establishes the fact the the state is reponsible for the Act. In South Dakota, the Governor is specifically responsible for administration of JTPA and is required by law to divide the state into service delivery areas and to provide a private industry council (PIC) to plan the spending of funds in each area. Title II of JTPA takes an additional direction and authorizes a training program for disadvantaged youth and adults (16-22) (22-over), as well as authorizing summer jobs and training for youth. The third part, Title III has a special emphasis that provides for job search for adults needing retraining as well as the unique feature of training and relocating disadvantaged workers. Title IV of JTPA authorizes a series of federally administered programs and activities related to community improvements, such as the repair of roads, bridges, and city water systems. It should be reinforced that the intent is to create jobs and put people back to work.

The need for a program that retrains people as quickly as possible has been recognized by the administration and is reflected in the act. Although JTPA does not go into effect until October 1, 1983, because of unemployment problems with dislocated workers, Congress appropriated $25 million for Title III of JTPA, effective December 1982. These funds will assist 3,000 people in FY 1983. An additional $85 million was appropriated bringing a total of $110 million for FY 1983. FY 1984 appropriation of $240 million will service an estimated 96,000 dislocated workers. Title III is administered by the Department of Labor and is in effect and being administered in the State of South Dakota at the present time.

In conslusion, there are three points of strength for the success of JTPA and its effectiveness in the state. The first point is that the Act contains a permanent authorization which relieves the program from constant reexamination which was required by previous legislations. The second strength is that the Act provides advance funding which may relieve the program from the burden of receiving allocations only after the start of the program year. And finally (maybe the most important point), the Act relies on performance standards rather than on progress requirements.

The JTPA program is impacting on the retraining of adults and is a visible, viable and clear commitment to the idea that retraining adults is an investment in people.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cullen, J., S. Swazin, G. Sisson and R. Swanson. Cost Effectiveness: A model for Assessing the Training Investment, Training and Development Journal. January, 1978, pp. 24-29.

Department of Labor, State of South Dakota, The Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan for the Jobs Training Partnership Act, Pierre, South Dakota, 1983.

Lofft, Virginia M. Successful Meetings, March, 1983, Philadelphia, PA: Bill Publications, pp. 4-7.

Odiorne, G. The need for an Economic Approach to Training, Training and Development Journal, June, 1979, pp. 32-40.

Oxenfledt, A. F. Cost Benefit Analysis for Executive Decision-Making, New York: AMACOM, 1979.

Tosti, D. How not to Waste you Training Dollars, Administrative Management, February, 1980, pp. 44-45.